

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-51. (Canceled)

52. (Currently amended) A method of remotely managing inventories of a plurality of vending devices over a communications network, comprising the steps of:

~~authenticating an operator to determine if said operator is a professional hair or beauty care provider authorized to access one of said plurality of vending devices;~~

~~permitting said operator to purchase one or more hair care or cosmetic products from an accessed vending device if it is determined that said operator is said professional hair or beauty care provider authorized to access said accessed vending device;~~

generating transaction data when a purchase is made on a vending device, said transaction data comprising identification information of said accessed vending device and ~~said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by an operator~~ said professional hair or beauty care provider from said accessed vending device;

receiving said transaction data from each of said plurality of vending devices by a central computer over said communications network; and

remotely managing inventory of each of said plurality of vending devices by said central computer which maintains and updates inventory data for said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said transaction data received from said each of said plurality of vending devices over said communications network when a purchase is made on said each of said plurality of vending devices; [[,]] and

scheduling delivery to replace vended hair care or cosmetic products to said each of said plurality of vending devices by said central computer based on said updated inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices.

53. (Currently amended) The method of claim 52, further comprising the steps of:

authenticating an operator to determine if said operator is a professional hair or beauty care provider authorized to access one of said plurality of vending devices;

permitting said operator to purchase one or more hair care or cosmetic products from an accessed vending device if it is determined that said operator is said professional hair or beauty care provider authorized to access said vending device; and

dispensing said one or more hair care or cosmetic products by said accessed vending device.

54. (Currently amended) The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of receiving payment information from said operator ~~professional hair or beauty care provider~~.

55. (Currently amended) The method of claim 53, further comprising the step of verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products by said ~~accessed~~ vending device.

56. (Currently amended) The method of claim 55, further comprising the step of dispensing said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said ~~accessed~~ vending device if it is determined that said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.

57. (Currently amended) The method of claim 55, further comprising the step of displaying an insufficient fund message on said ~~accessed~~ vending device if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
58. (Currently amended) The method of claim 55, further comprising the step of inhibiting said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from being dispensed from said ~~accessed~~ vending device if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
59. (Currently amended) The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator ~~profession hair or beauty care provider~~ from said ~~accessed~~ vending device.
60. (Currently amended) A method of remotely managing inventories of a plurality of vending devices over a communications network, comprising the steps of:
- receiving a selection of one or more hair care or cosmetic products from an operator by one of said plurality of vending devices;
  - receiving payment information from said operator by said an ~~said~~ accessed vending device;
  - verifying, by said accessed vending device, said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products selected by said operator;
  - dispensing said one or more hair care or cosmetic products by said accessed vending device if it is determined that said received payment information is

sufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products;

generating transaction data, said transaction data comprising identification information of said accessed vending device and said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator from said accessed vending device;

receiving said transaction from each of said plurality of vending devices by a central computer over said communications network; ~~and~~

remotely managing inventory of each of said plurality of vending devices by said central computer which maintains and updates inventory data for said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said transaction data received from said each of said plurality of vending devices over said communications network when a purchase is made on said each of said plurality of vending devices; [[,]] and

scheduling delivery to replace vended hair care or cosmetic products to said each of said plurality of vending devices by said central computer based on said updated inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices.

61. (Previously presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising the step of authenticating said operator to determine if said operator is a professional user authorized to access said accessed vending device.
62. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, further comprising the step of inhibiting said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from being dispensed from said accessed vending device if it is determined that said operator is not said professional user authorized to access said accessed vending device.
63. (Previously presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message on said accessed vending device if it is

determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.

64. (Previously presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising the step of inhibiting said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from being dispensed from said accessed vending device if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
65. (Previously presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator from said accessed vending device if it is determined that said operator is authorized to access said vending device.
66. (Currently amended) A method of remotely managing inventories of a plurality of vending devices over a communications network, comprising the steps of:
- receiving a selection of a shade from a plurality of shades associated with a hair care or cosmetic product from an operator by an accessed vending device;
  - determining by said accessed vending device a pre-specified amount of each base stock color required to prepare said shade selected by said operator;
  - delivering said tray containing said shade of said prepared hair care or cosmetic product at the point-of-use to said operator by said accessed vending device;
  - generating transaction data by said accessed vending device, said transaction data comprising identification information of said accessed vending device and said shade of said prepared hair care or cosmetic product purchased by said operator from said accessed vending device;
  - receiving said transaction data from each of said plurality of vending devices by a central computer over said communications network; and

remotely managing inventory of each of said plurality of vending devices by said central computer which maintains and updates inventory data for said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said transaction data received from said each of said plurality of vending devices over said communications network when a purchase of said shade is made on said each of said plurality of vending devices; and

scheduling delivery to replace depleted base stock colors to said each of said plurality of vending devices by said central computer based on said updated inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices.

67. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, further comprising the step of authenticating said operator to determine if said operator is a professional user authorized to access said accessed vending device.
68. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, further comprising the steps of mixing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product by said accessed vending device prior to delivering said tray containing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product to said operator.
69. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, further comprising the step of receiving payment information from said operator by said accessed vending device.
70. (Previously presented) The method of claim 69, further comprising the step of verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said shade of said hair care or cosmetic product by said accessed vending device.

71. (Previously presented) The method of claim 70, further comprising the step of inhibiting said tray containing said shade of said prepared hair care or cosmetic product from being dispensed from said accessed vending device if it is determined said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said shade of said prepared hair care or cosmetic product.
72. (Previously presented) The method of claim 70, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message on said accessed vending device if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said shade of said hair care or cosmetic product.
73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, wherein the step of receiving a selection of said shade comprises the step of receiving a product sku number from said professional user by said accessed vending device.
74. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, wherein the step of receiving a selection of said shade comprises the step of displaying a set of said plurality of shades at a time on a display device of said accessed vending device to said professional user.
75. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said prepared hair care or cosmetic product from said accessed vending device.
76. (Currently amended) A system for remotely managing inventories of a plurality of vending devices over a communications network, comprising:  
a central computer in communications with said plurality of vending devices over said communications network; and  
each vending device comprising:

~~a processor to authenticate an operator to determine if said operator is a professional user authorized to access said each vending device;~~

~~an user interface to permit said operator to select and purchase one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said each vending device if said processor determines that said operator is said professional user authorized to access said each vending device;~~

a processor to generate transaction data comprising identification information of said each vending device and said one or more hair care cosmetic products purchased by said operator from said each vending device; and

~~a transmitting device to transmit transaction data generated by said processor to said central computer over said communications network; said transaction data comprising identification information of said each vending device and said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator from said each vending device; and~~

wherein said central computer remotely manages inventory of each of said plurality of vending devices by updating inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said transaction data received from said each of said plurality of vending devices over said communications network when a purchase is made on said each of said plurality of vending devices; [[,]] and

wherein said central computer schedules delivery to replaced vended hair care or cosmetic products to said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said updated inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices.

77. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein said each vending device further comprises a dispensing device to dispense said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said each vending device.
78. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein said each vending device further comprises a payment device to receive payment information from said operator.
79. (Previously presented) The system of claim 78, wherein said processor verifies whether said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
80. (Previously presented) The system of claim 79, wherein said each vending device further comprises a dispensing device to dispense said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said each vending device if said processor determines that said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
81. (Previously presented) The system of claim 79, wherein said each vending device further comprises a display device to display an insufficient fund message on said each vending device if said processor determines that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
82. (Currently amended) The system of claim 76, wherein said user interface comprises a keypad; wherein said processor authenticates said operator to determine if said operator is a professional user authorized to access said each vending device; and wherein said keypad permits said operator to select and purchase said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said each vending

device if said processor determines that said operator is said professional user authorized to access said each vending device.

83. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein said each vending device further comprises a printer to print a receipt for said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator from said each vending device.
84. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein said one or more hair or cosmetic products are hair dye products.
85. (Currently amended) A system for remotely managing inventories of a plurality of vending devices over a communications network, comprising:
- a central computer in communications with said plurality of vending devices over said communications network; and
  - each vending device comprising:
    - a user interface to receive a selection of one or more hair care or cosmetic products from an operator;
    - a payment device to receive payment information from said operator;
    - a processor to verify said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products selected by said operator;
    - a dispensing device to dispense said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said each vending device if said processor determines said received payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products; and
    - a transmitting device to transmit transaction data generated by said processor to said central computer over said communications network, said transaction data comprising identification information of said each vending

device and said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator from said each vending device; and

wherein said central computer remotely manages inventory of each of said plurality of vending devices by updating inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said transaction data received from said each of said plurality of vending devices over said communications network when a purchase is made on said each of said plurality of vending devices; [[,]] and

wherein said central computer schedules delivery to replace vended hair care or cosmetic products to said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said updated inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices.

86. (Previously presented) The system of claim 85, wherein said processor authenticates said operator to determine if said operator is a professional user authorized to access said each vending device.
87. (Previously presented) The system of claim 86, wherein said processor inhibits said dispensing device from dispensing said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said each vending device if said processor determines said operator is not said professional user authorized to access said each vending device.
88. (Previously presented) The system of claim 85, wherein said each vending device further comprises a display device to display an insufficient fund message on said each vending device if said processor determines that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.

89. (Previously presented) The system of claim 85, wherein said user interface comprises a keypad.
90. (Previously presented) The system of claim 85, wherein said each vending device further comprises a printer to print a receipt for said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator from said each vending device.
91. (Previously presented) The system of claim 85, wherein said one or more hair care or cosmetic products are hair dye products.
92. (Currently amended) A system for remotely managing inventories of a plurality of vending devices over a communications network, comprising:  
a central computer in communications with said plurality of vending devices over said communications network; and  
each vending device comprising:  
a user interface to receive a selection of a shade from a plurality of shades associated with a hair care or cosmetic product from an operator;  
a payment device to receive payment information from said professional user;  
a processor to determine a pre-specified amount of each base stock color required to prepare said shade selected by said operator, and to generate a transaction data when said payment information is received by said payment device for said hair care or cosmetic product, said transaction data comprising identification information of said each vending device, said shade of said hair care or cosmetic product purchased by said operator;  
a plurality of reservoirs, each containing different base stock color of said hair care or cosmetic product, to dispense said determined pre-specified amount of the respective base stock color into a tray to provide said shade of said hair care or cosmetic product;

a dispensing device for delivering said tray containing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product at the point-of-use to said operator; and

a transmitting device for transmitting said transaction data to said central computer over said communications network; and

wherein said central computer remotely manages inventory of each of said plurality of vending devices by updating inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said transaction data received from said each of said plurality of vending devices when a purchase of said shade is made on said each of said plurality of vending devices; [[,]] and

wherein said central computer schedules delivery to replace depleted base stock colors to said each of said plurality of vending devices based on said updated inventory data maintained at said central computer for said each of said plurality of vending devices.

93. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said processor authenticates said operator to determine if said operator is a professional user authorized to access said each vending device.
94. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said each vending device further comprises a mixing device to mix said prepared hair care or cosmetic product prior to delivering said tray containing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product to said operator by said dispensing device.
95. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said each vending device further comprises a payment device to receive payment information from said operator.

96. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said processor verifies said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said shade of said hair care or cosmetic product.
97. (Previously presented) The system of claim 96, wherein said processor inhibits delivery of said tray containing said shade of said prepared hair care or cosmetic product by said dispensing device if it is determined said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said shade of said prepared hair care or cosmetic product.
98. (Previously presented) The system of claim 96, wherein said each vending device further comprises a display device to display an insufficient fund message if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said selection of said shade of said hair care or cosmetic product.
99. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said user interface comprises a keypad to receive a product sku number corresponding to said shade from said operator.
100. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said each vending device further comprises a display device to display a set of said plurality of shades at a time; and wherein said user interface comprises a keypad to receive said selection of said shade selected from said set of said plurality of shades displayed on said display device by said operator.
101. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said each vending device further comprises a printer to print a receipt for said prepared hair care or cosmetic product purchased by said operator.
102. (Previously presented) The system of claim 92, wherein said prepared hair care or cosmetic product is a hair dye product.